

City Council adopts street renaming policy

by Matthew Girard |

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Despite some opposition, the City of Belton moved forward with adoption of a Street Renaming and Facility Naming policy at Tuesday night's City County meeting at the Harris Community Centre.

After the resolution was tabled at the last council meeting to make some minor corrections, the resolution was brought before the council once again, but members of the Belton African American Churches United organization stated that they had been mistreated because its request to rename a street after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would now fall under the adopted resolution.

The new resolution calls for an applicant submitting a petition with a signed approval of 70 percent property owners along the affected street, be willing to pay for the new signs and a \$150 application fee.

Although the BAACU supported the resolution, Chairman Rev. Dr. William M. Hill asked the council to exclude this particular name change be exempt from the policy.

"We have no problem with a renaming resolution being implemented, but we want to be under the old one," Hill said.

Hill also said he felt the BAACU had been "mistreated."

Mayor Jim Covington defended the policy and asked that any concessions to the policy be addressed at a later date.

"The intent was not to slow down the renaming of a street after a great American," Covington said. "We recognize the value of Dr. King and we would like to do that. The reason we established the committee was that we didn't know there was an issue. Now we've got an issue and we needed to address it with a policy and that's what we are doing."

Addressing members of the BAACU, Covington said he and the council never intended to "mistreat" anyone with the resolution.

"I'm heartbroken that you feel we have mistreated you," Covington said to the BAACU members. "That was certainly not our intent. We will do what we can to honor the request. However, a request needs to be made under the resolution and then if there is any consideration given to wave the fees, we can look at it at that time."

The resolution passed with a 6-1 vote, with councilmember Wayne Carpenter voting no. In other business, the council finished up the FY 2012-13 budget with a "clean-up" workshop. The council then called for a public hearing to be held on Sept. 4 for the proposed budget.

The City Council also received a report from Wayne Farrell, Executive Director of the Bell County Public Health District.